

Subject: English III Honors

Topic: Julius Caesar

Title of Lesson: Shakespeare Spoke English, Too (60 minutes)

Objectives:

1. Students will collaborate as a class in order to understand form of the Shakespearean verse.

([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4](#)) (E3-1.5)
2. Students will create their own soliloquies as characters from *Julius Caesar* using iambic pentameter

([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3](#))(E3-1.1)
3. Students will translate a modern text into iambic pentameter and vice versa, showing their understanding of the information learned in class.

([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D](#)) (E3-5.2)

Purpose: As a result of this lesson, students will have a better understanding of Shakespeare's language. They will, in turn, use this language to create their own soliloquies as characters from the play with drives this unit, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*.

Materials:

- Shakespeare's Language Prezi (1)
- Whiteboard/Blackboard (1)
- Reader Response Journals (25)
- Copies of Julius Caesar (25)

-Pens & Pencils (25)

-YouTube Video- We Should All Just Stab Caesar (1)

-Copies of Mean Girl's Monologue

Procedures:

Procedures for *Introducing* the Lesson:

Students will come into the room and immediately retrieve their reader response journals. I will tell them what we will be doing today as a class, and then put up the prompt on the board that they will respond to in their journals individually. The prompt reads: "What do you know about Shakespeare already? Take a few moments to write down your thoughts before we get started. What do you think about Shakespeare's language?" I will give the students (~5 minutes) to respond, after which time we will reconvene as a class and discuss what we already know about Shakespeare's language and plays. Discussion should take (~5 minutes)

Segue: Today we are going to concentrate on Shakespeare's language in particular. You cannot begin reading a play without knowing the language it is written in. Although Shakespeare spoke in English, some believe that his words are as foreign a concept as another language.

Shakespeare is not simple, so I will remind the class not to be discouraged if they do not understand right away.

Procedures for *Developing* the Lesson:

The powerpoint will serve as a guide. Although lengthy, it contains all of the things necessary for us to proceed with our work on *Julius Caesar*. The powerpoint is largely response based and involves the students working out iambic pentameter as a class. When I am finished

explaining iambic pentameter to the students, we will do a small game based on one found in this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Qv-sjQHgZ8#t=179>

The game involves me clapping out a rhythm. The rhythm can be quite random at first, and it will become a call and response, the students copying the rhythm that I clap out. After a few different patterns, I will clap out a typical line of iambic pentameter. One of the most interesting things that I have ever heard about iambic pentameter is that it is the closest thing to our natural speech because it sounds like a heart beat. I will point this out to my students. This exercise establishes a physical connection with the text, rather than just lecturing to the students. The first half of the presentation should take (~20 minutes)

The rest of the powerpoint focuses on translating modern text into iambic pentameter and vice versa. We will begin crafting our own Shakespearean verse, using the translation technique from Milner and Milner in order to help the students understand how to write in the same style as William Shakespeare. It is not an easy task to write in iambic pentameter, especially not alone, but as a class it will become much easier. This portion of the lesson is adapted from the Folger Shakespeare Library's website (Writing a Group Sonnet: Lesson 8, The Folger Shakespeare Library). The students will be shown a short clip from *Mean Girls* which, as Juniors in high school, many of the students can relate to the characters. This particular segment is also helpful because it opens the students up to the theme that we will eventually discuss: betrayal. After we listen to the *Mean Girls* monologue about Caesar and Brutus, we will translate her short speech into iambic pentameter. Students will find that they can shorten words and lengthen them as Shakespeare did, and often times it was a matter of convenience, not trying to sound fancy, that

led Shakespeare to use the words he did. We will notice that, a lot of the time, lines will sound nonsensical, but we can tweak them to make them work for our version. We will do this by collaborating as a class, and when we are finished, we will read our version aloud and re-watch the clip while reading to point out similarities. This humorous activity allows the students to really enter into the text and experience it for themselves. This exercise really gives the students the chance to go through all stages of the Enter, Extend, Explore (Milner & Milner). Doing this exercise allows students to really enter into the text, extend their knowledge, and explore what it means to create a sonnet themselves. This exercise also uses the “Translation” technique that *Bridging English* suggests using for poetry, allowing the students to write in the style of the author and create original content (Milner, 129).

(-20 minutes)

After translating modern English into iambic pentameter, we will reassemble as a class and begin reading Act One, Scene One of *Julius Caesar*. Reading this first scene as a class will allow me to catch a few comprehension mistakes and guide the students to the notes that their editions of the play have either on corresponding pages or in the footnotes. We will go through and translate the text, paraphrasing the lines together as a class. I will pause every so often and ask, “What do you think that means?” or something along those lines in order to push students to a challenge themselves with the text. Approaching the text from both sides, translating it into and out of iambic pentameter and Shakespearean verse creates a duality to the language that students often cannot see while just reading and trying to make sense of the language. We will do this until there is about 5 minutes left in class, at which time I will explain the homework to the class.

(-10 minutes)

Procedures of *Concluding* the Lesson:

Students will be asked to take their agendas and write down the homework assignment written on the board. (Homework Below) This assignment takes the work that we did in class and applies it to the text. Students will be expected to complete the assignment by the next class period so that we can share them as a class before diving into the first few scenes with our main characters. I will assign the homework and ask the students if they have any questions or comments about our lesson today before dismissing them.

(~5)

Homework Assignment

Read through Act 1, Scenes ii and iii paying attention to the character's language and how it contributes to their characterization.

Then, using the information that we learned today in class about iambic pentameter, create a 10 line soliloquy for a character of your choice.

Your soliloquy must use Iambic Pentameter, although you may use modern English, and characterize your character.

We will present these in class tomorrow, and they will be handed in, so be sure to have yours typed or *extremely neatly* written for me.

Evaluating/Assessing Learning:

During the lesson: During the lesson I will be looking for students to participate in all activities, beginning with their reader response journals. Journals are collected every day

after class and are counted as 1 point (of 2 possible points per day) of the student's participation grade. All students are expected to participate in some way, whether it is asking questions, making a comment, or contributing to group work. I will monitor learning by walking around the room and staying engaged with the students at all time. Students that participate and are responsive during class time will receive their 2nd participation point of the day.

After the lesson: Students will be expected to complete homework in a timely manner.

Homework that is turned in incomplete or not turned in at all will receive points off. Incomplete homework will be at the teacher's discretion, while late homework has a chance to be submitted with 10 points (out of a possible 100 points) taken off every day that it is late. Students are also expected to do the reading for that night. Usually, homework assignments such as the one assigned with today's lesson, will not be assigned every night. Instead, students will be assigned readings and be expected to have taken notes/annotated their plays. A large part of Shakespeare is taking notes on things you understand and things that you do not so that you can have them explained. Students are expected to come in every day with a quote from the reading that they found interesting and have evidence to support it. We will often use these quotes as bell ringer exercises.

Accommodations for Diverse Learners:

Student Living in Poverty:

- Student will be given ample notice of deadlines
- Student will be offered extra help on assignments given
- Student will be offered use of school technology to type assignment. If student prefers to

work from home and shows the capability to do so, I will allow the student to hand write the paper, so long as their handwriting is legible.

Student with a Physical Challenge:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- Aside from general accommodations listed, I will ensure that any group work done will take into account that the student does not have to move from their seat--unless they wish to do so and it is within their physical ability.

English Language Learner:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- ELL student will be given copies of all handouts and rubric in their native language.
- Student will also be given a copy of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in their native language. Group discussion will help student to become more comfortable speaking English with their classmates.

High Achieving Student:

- Please see general accommodations.

At Risk Student:

- Student will receive physical copies of all handouts.
- Student will have a chance to interact with classmates during group and partner work
- Student will have the chance to reflect on their own opinions, making the material more interesting.
- Whole class discussion will enable student to feel heard, especially creatively.

Student on the Autism Spectrum:

- All 504 accommodations will be made.
- See general accommodations.

Lesson adapted from Andrea Wurzbarger's Lesson Plan: *Shall I Compare Thee to a Sonnet?*

JULIUS CAESAR: TRANSLATING SHAKESPEARE HANDOUT

Mean Girls Monologue: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPDt6cMYvoM>

Why should Caesar get to stomp around like a giant?

While the rest of us try not to get smushed under his big feet.

Whats so great about Caesar? Hmm?

Brutus is just as smart as Caesar.

Okay, Brutus is just as cute as Caesar.

People totally like Brutus, just as much as they like Caesar.

And when did it become okay for one person to be the boss of everybody?

Huh!? Because thats not what Rome is about!

We should totally just stab Caesar!

Lesson Plan 1, Works Cited:

1. Milner, Joseph O'Beirne, Lucy Floyd Morcock Milner, and Joan F. Mitchell. *Bridging English*. 5th ed. New York: Merrill, 1993. Print.
2. Shakespeare, William, and Susan P. Cerasano. *Julius Caesar*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012. Print.
3. "We Should Totally Just Stab Caesar." *YouTube*. YouTube, 26 Mar. 2009. Web. 29 Mar. 2014.
4. "Writing a Group Sonnet: Lesson 8 ." *The Folger Shakespeare Library*. The Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.
5. Wurzburger, Andrea J. *"Shall I Compare Thee To A Sonnet?"* Lesson Plan. N.p.: n.p., 2014. Print.